

TO SPREAD GOSPEL OF CONSERVATION

National Association Intends to Carry Work Into Every State in Union.

PLANS VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN

ONE PURPOSE IS TO KEEP TRACK OF LEGISLATION.

(Special to The Herald-Republican.) Washington, April 29.—Plans are under way to carry the conservation campaign into every state. With Gifford Pinchot as its president, the National Conservation association, which has its headquarters in the Colorado building here, has begun a vigorous campaign to extend its membership into every part of the country. The association already has members in every state and territory, but the campaign just started is intended to bring the enrollment up to 100,000 members.

Mr. Pinchot feels that it is a critical time for the conservation movement and he has asked for the help of every patriotic citizen. His appeal, sent throughout the country, is bringing notable results, and those in charge here declare that the association will soon be a great force in national public affairs.

The National Conservation association is made up of an individual membership—men and women—who believe in the principles of the conservation movement. The membership fee is two dollars. The principles on which the association is founded are those declared by the governors at their now historic conference with President Roosevelt at the White House in 1908. The declaration adopted by the governors at that meeting was very general in character, but it laid down principles which could not possibly be misunderstood. These principles have been taken by the National Conservation association and have been made concrete, specific and practical.

The association is already doing practical work. James R. Garfield, former secretary of the interior, one of its leading members, has appeared before the Senate committee on public lands, favoring a bill to authorize the President of the United States to withdraw lands chiefly valuable for coal, water power, mineral phosphate, etc., so that such lands may be disposed of in the interest of all the people, instead

of in the interest of a few; and the committee has made a favorable report, carrying out the suggestions of the association, as outlined by Mr. Garfield.

Bulletin by Pinchot.
Mr. Pinchot, as president of the association, has sent out a bulletin to all the members of the association, calling on them to write to their congressmen, urging the immediate passage of this bill.

At the beginning, the conservation movement was criticized by its enemies for being too theoretical and academic. As the movement advanced, the principles which the governors declared received wider and wider endorsement until they had, with the exception of the open enemies of conservation, practically the unanimous endorsement of the country. But those who were active in the conservation movement felt that too general approval without specific, practical application of those principles, was even dangerous to success and that what was needed to insure the practical application of conservation principles was a national conservation association.

The National Conservation commission, which on the recommendation of the governors, President Roosevelt had created, was killed by the amendment which Representative Tawney of Minnesota succeeded in attaching to the sundry civil bill of 1908. The work the commission had been carrying on was taken up independently by the joint committee on conservation, an unofficial body supported by private funds, and carried on with marked success. There are now forty-two state conservation commissions and fifty-one conservation committees of national organizations. The joint committee accomplished notable results acting as a clearing house for these commissions and committees. But friends of conservation felt that there should be some national organization through which the individual citizen could join in the movement.

So last July men who had taken the lead in the conservation movement in the different parts of the country, met with Doctor Charles W. Eliot, president-emeritus of Harvard university and president of the National Conservation association. Doctor Eliot was made president. Under his leadership the association at once met with a hearty response. Its first bulletin called the attention of its members and the public to the situation with regard to the coal lands of Alaska, which have since achieved such prominence through the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy.

Dr. Eliot's Views.
In that bulletin, which was issued back in November, Doctor Eliot, speaking for the association, said:

"The National Conservation association is convinced of the urgent need of immediate measures to prevent the control of the great sources of heat and mechanical power in the United States from being seized by monopolistic organizations, and to secure the best development of these sources in the interest of the whole people."

The Alaska coal situation had not then assumed the prominence and notoriety that it has since achieved. The association appealed to the people to bring the urgent needs of the situation to the attention of their representatives in Congress.

When Gifford Pinchot was dismissed as United States forester by President Taft, Doctor Eliot immediately called his executive committee together, presented his resignation and nominated Mr. Pinchot as his successor, saying Mr. Pinchot was the recognized head of the conservation movement, and that, as by President Taft's action, he had been relieved of his official connection with the government, it was eminently fitting that he should take the actual leadership of the National Conservation association. The committee elected Mr. Pinchot president and conferred on Dr. Eliot the honorary presidency, which he still retains.

The National Conservation association is a fighting force for conservation. The other conservation bodies have devoted their efforts more or less to the study of the various conditions, studies, conditions and situations closely, and after it has studied them and decided what ought to be done, it goes about doing it. The other conservation organizations were tied up by official connections.

The National Conservation association takes the ground that the individual citizen ought to have a good deal to say about what should be done with the country's natural resources. Those resources belong to the people, it holds, and, therefore, the people ought to have a voice as to how these resources are disposed of. The conservation association proposes to give the people a voice. To that end its founders organized it as a popular body through which the individual citizen might give utterance to his conservation sentiment.

Looks After the Bills.
A great many conservation bills are proposed. Some of them are good; many of them are bad. The Conservation association, through its law officer, Philip P. Wells, gives close study to the various bills and advises its members of the provisions and meaning of those that should be passed and of those that should be killed. There are a great many conservation measures, of course, good and bad, that never stand a chance of passing. The association watches these carefully, but it does not bother its members about them until time for action has come, and action is needed one way or the other, then it acts.

When the nine so-called "Administration Conservation bills," prepared by Secretary Ballinger, were at his request introduced by Senator Nelson, the association immediately took up a careful study of them and advised its members of their provisions. It was absolutely frank in its statement, saying:

"Two of the bills are good, and, when certain necessary amendments are made, they should have the hearty support of every member of this association. Two are good and bad in about equal proportion. One is predominantly bad. The three remaining bills are thoroughly unfortunate and should be rewritten entirely."

The membership of the National Conservation association extends into every state. In Wisconsin, a strong state committee, under the leadership of William M. Bray, a member of the legislature, is conducting an active campaign. In Chicago, a committee of the association has been formed under the presidency of Alfred L. Baker, and has already raised a large fund for conservation work. Plans are under consideration for organized work in St. Louis and a number of other large cities of the country.

The men associated with Mr. Pinchot in the active daily direction of the affairs of the association are men who have been connected with the conservation movement, even before its formal inception at the White House conference of governors, which President Roosevelt invited, in May, 1908. The vice-president of the association is Walter L. Fisher of Chicago, one of the well-known lawyers of the middle west. Mr. Fisher was president of the Conservative league of America, which had its headquarters in Chicago, and which was the first unofficial conservation organization to be formed. President Roosevelt was honorary president of the league and William H. Taft and William J. Bryan were honorary vice-presidents. When the National Conservation association was formed the league was merged into it. The officers of the association are the following: President, Gifford Pinchot; honorary president, Charles W. Eliot; vice-president, Walter L. Fisher; treasurer, Overton W. Price; secretary, Thomas E. Shipp; assistant secretary, James C. Gilpe; consul, Philip P. Wells.

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